

**NATIONWIDE FOLKLIFE PROGRAMS STUDY:
UNDERSTANDING THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE FIELD
IN 2015-2016**

May 2016

Maryland Traditions, the folklife program of the Maryland State Arts Council

in association with the

American Folklore Society

Report compiled and written by Robert Forloney

Executive Summary

Maryland Traditions, the folklife program of the Maryland State Arts Council, conducted an operational survey of the various folklife programs and centers in each state during late winter, 2015, and early spring, 2016. This project was supported in part by generous funding from the American Folklore Society (AFS) so that its findings could be made accessible to the field of folklore studies and public folklore as a whole. The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the current infrastructure of the folklife field at the state level. In particular, the study aimed to produce a report that brings together information on the following aspects of each state's folklife program:

- Funding structure
- Budget and staff size
- Physical and operational structure
- Activities, outreach, and programming

Due to the fact that folklife programs nationwide operate in a variety of ways, such as through being based in arts agencies, or at universities, as well as through other non-profit organizations, compiling this information into one report should greatly benefit the field as a whole. Moreover, this knowledge will help to highlight particular programs as models for others, further strengthening the field and its interconnectedness. After the data collection period, the findings were compiled into this final report and submitted to Maryland Traditions and AFS to be shared with its professional circles, members, and constituents.

This report was researched, compiled and written by Robert Forloney on behalf of Maryland Traditions in the early spring of 2016. It builds upon an existing foundation of research, including *The Changing Faces of Tradition: A Report on the Folk and Traditional Arts in the United States*, edited by Elizabeth Peterson (1996); reports by organizations to the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies; and correspondence with a number of colleagues. Crucial to the effort was the 2011 *State Folk Arts Programs: Achievements, Challenges and Needs* report that was completed by the State Arts Agencies Folk Arts Peer Group Planning Committee in association with AFS, NASAA and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Folk & Traditional Arts Program. The study focused primarily on the relationships between the NEA and state folk arts programs as well as overall objectives, opportunities and barriers as opposed to the detailing of operational structures. One of the recommendations that suggested ways forward for strengthening the communication between programs was through increasing the knowledge of how each program operates and is structured. The *Nationwide Folklife Programs Study* is an effort to do just that.

Findings from the Field

There is a tremendous amount of diversity in terms of each state's folklife activities, both with regard to those programs that serve under the umbrella of a state sanctioned agency, as well as those with organizations that serve the public as non-profits with no state affiliations. It would not be too much of a stretch to state that each state's folklife program is somewhat unique, given the various political, economic, pragmatic and strategic differences, making direct comparisons

difficult.

Without a national service organization to rigidly track all of the folk and traditional arts activities undertaken across the nation, systematically gather information about the operational structures as they exist in each state, and update this data with ever changing situations, having a clear sense of every state's program at any given time is exceptionally difficult. A number of states have State Folklorists, some have dedicated staff to work on folklife programs, while many others have staff with multiple duties. There are states with "dormant" programs waiting for the restoration of funding and others without the ability to staff and implement a statewide initiative. The NEA Folk & Traditional Arts Program has a good deal of contact with, as well as activity information for, those programs that apply for federal grants or seek other types of support, but this is not the case for every state. (For the current fiscal year, 41 different applicants applied for funding, with 38 of those being states.)

In addition to the diversity of formats described above, folklife programs nationwide operate in a wide variety of ways, being based in arts councils, other state arts or historical agencies; at museums or universities; as well as through other non-profits and even one "regional arts organization." The placement of the program often has a direct impact on the allocation of resources, types of staff expertise, stated program objectives, audiences served and how public programming is implemented, with each situation having its own particular strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. In some ways comparing these assorted operational strategies and resources is like comparing apples to oranges. Utilizing the same measurement of capacity and activity, the survey presented below is an effort to consistently gather information from this diverse assemblage.

Project Outcomes

There were a number of end products as the result of this research project:

- 1) An up-to-date (as of May 2016) contact list of participating state folklife/traditional arts programs, as well as additional regional centers and other organizations providing folklore programming, research and outreach (as submitted by each organization.)
- 2) A collection of comprehensive surveys from 47 participating state folklife/traditional arts programs, as well as 13 additional regional centers and other organizations detailing their operational capacity, funding structure, and physical operation, as well as stakeholders, outreach, granting and programming activities.
- 3) The report, *Nationwide Folklife Programs Study: Understanding the Infrastructure of the Field in 2015-2016*, which serves to analyze, synthesize and present data submitted by folklife programs from states.

Select overall findings:

- . Almost every state in the nation, 47 in total, has a state folklife program in some capacity, even if limited to only a small number of activities or grant administration.
- . Of the 47 state programs responding, the significant majority operates under a state organization – most often an arts council/agency (33), at times a history/humanities agency (3), but also including colleges/universities (4), museums (2), non-profits (4), and an historical society and a regional arts organization.
- . Every state in the nation has some sort of on-going folklife activity, even those without specifically dedicated state folklife programs, due to other non-profits, museums, colleges/universities, regional arts partners and/or individual scholars fulfilling some aspects of this role.
- . The level of public support, amount of folklife activity and numbers of organizations involved varies greatly from state to state and in some cases, time period to time period, dependent on the current economic situation, political will and individual expertise.
- . Public and grant support structure/shape state folklife programs to implement their activities in meaningful ways and in direct response to the needs of its constituents.
- . The vast majority of state folklife programs are implemented by only 1 or 2 staff members, who are, as likely as not, involved with coordinating multiple programs for their agency.
- . Most staff has been trained in folklore methodologies, with anthropology and fine arts/art history being heavily represented as well.
- . The nationwide folklife infrastructure is supported by the NEA's Folk Arts Partnership Program. This funding is the bedrock of state folk arts programs, enabling each to provide services and programming to traditional artists/communities, scholars and students, as well as the general public.
- . Approximately 58% of programs fundraise specifically for folklife activities, most through grant writing and/or direct solicitation.
- . Traditional artists and their communities as well as citizens are clearly identified as the main stakeholders for most state folklife programs, as well as other organizations and centers.
- . It is commonly believed that ensuring that state programs include traditional artists and communities is key to bridging cultural differences and building understanding, respect, and civility in our nation.
- . While a diverse group of stakeholders was identified during this project, it is clear that traditional artists and their communities, along with the general public, are the primary audiences for programming as well as those groups targeted for service.
- . Experienced folklife staff, with the appropriate academic background and professional experience, allow for cultural sensitivity when working with traditional artist and their communities. This expertise is also necessary to ensure the proper documentation,

stewardship and engaging interpretation of traditions for diverse public audiences.

- . State folklife programs, as well as non-affiliated organizations, strive to sustain cultural traditions within local communities while conducting significant new research, and then making it accessible to the general public through innovative programming. This work is taking many forms across the nation – from developing festivals and convening workshops to hosting musical performances, collaborating with scholars, and utilizing new technologies.
- . Administering funding, particularly apprenticeship and project grants, plays a significant role for the vast majority of state folklife organizations. Providing technical assistance for tradition bearers on everything from grant writing to connecting masters with apprentices is vital for maintaining a robust community of practicing artists and performers.
- . Ethnographic field research that serves to identify new tradition bearers remains an important activity across all of the states in attempts to identify previously unknown cultural traditions and practitioners.
- . Documentation of this research continues to be an important responsibility, taking the form of both managing public archives, as well as providing public access to these repositories for scholars, college students and the general public.
- . Outreach is playing an increasingly significant role for folklife programs in the states. Many cultural communities have not been adequately served by past initiatives and efforts to rectify this situation are shown in the interest in partnerships, civic engagement and an emphasis on engaging diverse stakeholders.
- . Promoting living cultures is clearly a major objective of every program throughout the nation. Folklorists use their skills/talents to enable local communities to present, document and interpret their own traditions. It is clear from the contributed data that building respect and mutual understanding between and among local communities is a consistent goal.

This report was compiled and written by Robert Forloney on behalf of the Maryland Traditions in the early spring of 2016. Data for this research project was solicited by the distribution of surveys via direct email to state folklore programs as well as a number of non-state affiliated/independent organizations. In addition, the professional listserv, Publore, was used on two separate occasions to notify colleagues of the need to secure operational information about the field. Clifford Murphy and Cheryl Schiele at the NEA Folk & Traditional Arts program were kind enough to lend support and share contact information at several stages. Robert Baron at NYSCA provided very helpful foundational research as did Timothy Lloyd at AFS, and Michelle Stefano at Maryland Traditions. This assistance was much appreciated and immensely valuable.

An example of the distributed survey follows on page 6.

Nationwide Folklife Programs: Infrastructure Survey

Folklore Program Information

Program name: _____

Main Contact: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Website: _____

Capacity/Staffing

Total number of staff _____ Full-time _____ Part-time _____ Volunteer _____

Is this staff dedicated exclusively to the folklife program? Yes _____ No _____

Staff trained in: Folklore _____ Anthropology _____ Ethnomusicology _____ Museum
Studies _____

History _____ Fine Arts _____ American Studies _____
Education _____

Other(s): _____

Funding

Typical size of annual budget: less than \$50,000 _____ \$50,000 – \$75,000 _____ \$75,000 –
\$100,000 _____

\$100,000 – \$200,000 _____ \$200,000 – \$300,000 _____ \$300,000 – \$500,000 _____ \$500,000 –
\$750,000 _____

\$750,000– \$1,000,000 _____ \$1,000,000 – \$1,500,000 _____ \$1,500,000 – \$2,000,000 _____ other

What percentage of the operating budget is: private _____ public _____ grant based

Do you receive funding from: Federal _____ State _____ County _____ Municipalities _____

Do you fundraise specifically for your folklife program? If so

Physical/Operational Structure

Do you operate under: College/University _____ State Arts Council _____ Arts Agency _____
Museum _____ Non-profit _____ Other: _____

Are you located in: College/University _____ State Arts Council _____ Arts Agency _____
Museum _____ Non-profit _____ Other: _____

Rank all activities in which activities are you currently involved; you are welcome to clarify next to your ranking:

5 = main activity of our program, or a core aim 4 = regularly involved with this activity 3 = sometimes
2 = rarely 1 = never, but it is important/something we would like to do more 0 = outside of mission/not something we engage in

Operational activities

Partner with local government _____
Connect regional folklorists _____
Network with other folklife programs
Serve as center for civic engagement _____
Engage diverse stakeholders _____

Provide internship opportunities _____
Work with local colleges/universities

Community Outreach

Collaborate with other cultural organizations _____
Work with local schools _____

Public Programming

Promote living cultural traditions _____
Develop/Implement original programming _____
Develop/Coordinate folklife festivals _____
Host/present musical performances _____

Fieldwork-related Activities

Undertake ethnographic research _____
Work with independent scholars _____
Manage a folklife archive
Archive folklife materials _____
Provide public access to archived materials

Funding/Grants

Fund ethnographic research _____
Fund public programming _____
Administer project grants _____
Administer apprenticeship grants

Partner with traditional communities _____
Convene workshops or symposia _____
Display folklife exhibitions _____

Nationwide Folklife Programs: Infrastructure Survey cont'd

Do you have a designated folklife center? _____

Does it have a permanent, physical location? _____ If so, how many square feet?

Is there regular access available for (y/n:) Scholars _____ Students _____ General Public _____

How many days a week is it open? _____

What are the public hours? _____ Open nights? _____ Weekends? _____

Does it have dedicated exhibition space? _____

Does it have performance space? _____ If so, what type?

Is there space made available for demonstrations by artists or musicians? _____

A. CAPACITY AND STAFFING

State folklife programs, in conjunction with other folklife organizations and centers, have served as the primary infrastructure for a network that promotes, documents, supports, and interprets traditional cultures across this country. As demonstrated in the collected surveys these programs serve to bring together national, state, and local organizations, as well as government agencies in order to promote cultural understanding, provide educational opportunities and engage citizens. While folklife programs share many characteristics and objectives, each one undertakes programs and services that reflect the needs of its state's and the organization's mission.

1) Number of Staff and Time Allocation

The vast majority of state folklife programs are implemented by only one or two staff members, that are as likely as not, coordinating multiple programs for their agency at any given time. Of the 47 respondents, 38 have full-time staff of less than five. 8 programs utilized less than five part-time staff while another 5 employed five to ten such employees. While the staff size of the independent or non-state sanctioned organizations surveyed reflects a very similar staffing level, with 10 of 13 total organizations submitted having less than five full-time employees and only 1 in the range of 5 to 10, these staff are much more likely to have their time dedicated exclusively to folklife activities than their peers at state programs.

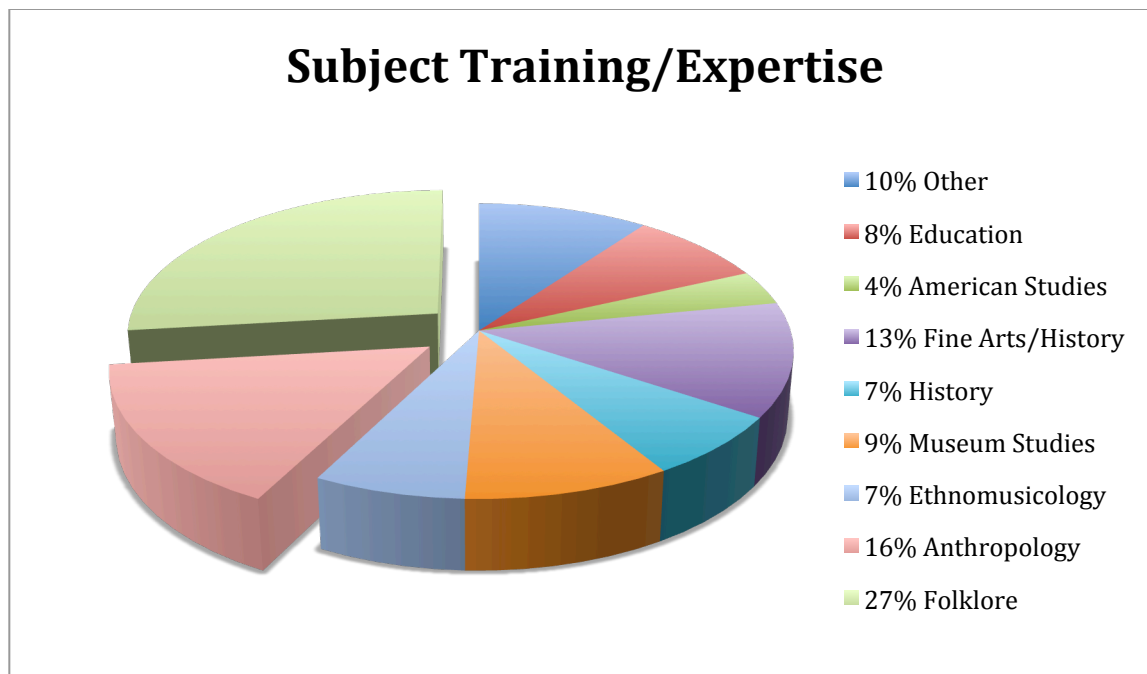
With the exceptions of the Western Folklife Center (WFC) and Southwest Folklife Alliance (SFA), which both do so to great effect, neither state nor independent programs notably utilize volunteers in any meaningful way. Though WFC and SFA both take advantage of 350 or more volunteers in different capacities, only one other organization indicated any use of volunteers, and that was at a level less than five.

Number and Type of Program Staff					
<i>State Folklife Program</i>	<i>Full-Time</i>	<i>Part-Time</i>	<i>Independent Program</i>	<i>Full-Time</i>	<i>Part-Time</i>
less than 5 staff	38	8	less than 5 staff	9	7
5 – 10 staff	3	5	5 – 10 staff	1	1
10 – 15 staff	2	0	10 – 15 staff	0	0
15 – 20 staff	0	0	15 – 20 staff	0	0
20 + staff	1	0	20 + staff	0	0

2) Expertise and Training

Most staff working at both state and independent programs has been trained in folklore methodologies, with anthropology and fine arts/art history being heavily represented as well. This is a positive finding in that one of the suggestions from the 2011 NASAA report was: “State folk arts programs should be directed by professional specialists with training and experience in folklore studies or a related discipline.” There were multiple reasons for this recommendation, including the need for peer review of folk arts applications requiring expert evaluation by these specialists, the objective of conducting new research, interpreting existing folklore materials and the wish to generate public programming.

Without public funding, and NEA support in particular, positions in a number of state folklife programs would clearly be eliminated. It is important to note that significant cuts to agency operational and grant making budgets often have adverse effects on folklore programs. The elimination of other state positions means that folklife program directors in many cases direct other agency programs. Only 51% of those directors overseeing state programs are exclusively dedicated to folklife activities. Other indirect adverse effects have been noted, such as travel restrictions limiting the capacity of programs to provide services, implement programs, and conduct fieldwork.



The diagram includes both types of programs as the training/expertise reflected in their staff was parallel. The totals were as follows:

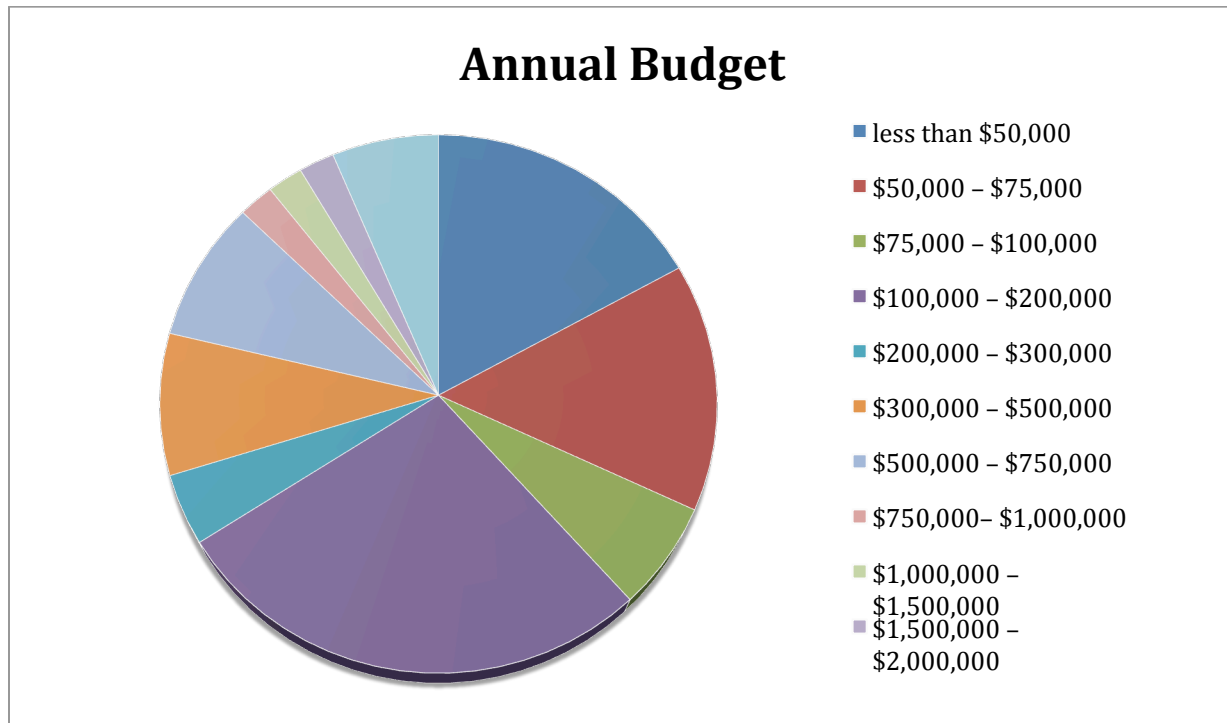
- Folklore – 43 or 27%
- Fine Arts – 20 or 13%
- Anthropology – 25 or 16%
- American Studies – 6 or 4%
- Ethnomusicology – 11 or 7%
- Education – 13 or 8%
- Museum Studies – 15 or 9%
- History – 11 or 7%
- Other – 14 or 10% (represented by Business-3, English, Journalism, Dance, Arts Management-2 each, Cultural Studies, Media, Public History, Science and Literature- 1 each)

B. FUNDING OF FOLKLIFE PROGRAMS

1) Annual Budget

The level of available funding, public support, amount of folklife activity, and numbers of organizations involved varies greatly from state to state and in some cases, time period to time period, dependent on the current economic situation, political will, and available expertise. Public and grant support can also serve to structure/shape the manner that a state folklife program implements its activities in meaningful ways and in direct response to the needs of its constituents.

Funding for State Folklife Programs



Typical size of annual budget			
(n = 44)		\$300,000 – \$500,000	4 or 9%
less than \$50,000	8 or 17%	\$500,000 – \$750,000	4 or 9%
\$50,000 – \$75,000	7 or 15%	\$750,000– \$1,000,000	1 or 2%
\$75,000 – \$100,000	3 or 6%	\$1,000,000 – \$1,500,000	1 or 2%
\$100,000 – \$200,000	13 or 28%	\$1,500,000 – \$2,000,000	1 or 2%
\$200,000 – \$300,000	2 or 4%	Other/no information	3 or 6%

2) Private, Public, and Grant Based Percentages

The state folk arts programs were established by the NEA and continue to be sustained through ongoing support from the NEA Folk & Traditional Arts Program. State and, to a lesser extent, private funds have provided supplementary funding for the wide range of activities undertaken. The exact mix of these funding sources differs from state to state, but public funding provides between 90% -100% of support for 27 of the 41 state programs answering this section of the survey. Of 47 respondents, 42 indicated receiving federal support and 40 indicated receiving funding from their local state. In addition 5 programs received funding from its local municipalities, while one had funding from their county and another from a university.

Despite significant economic challenges since the recession in 2008, state folklife programs have demonstrated exceptional resilience. State governments were under considerable fiscal pressure for some time due to lost revenues with programming and staff cuts as one potential way to alleviate this situation. Even with these difficulties, some discontinued programs, such as those in Florida and Oregon, were revived and Washington is now in the process of hiring a new state folklorist. Even though grant and public funding are still rebounding in many areas, services to the folk artists, their communities and the general public continued and, in a number of cases, actually expanded. As is apparent from the infrastructure survey, there is a tremendous amount of program implementation and robust activity taking place in most states.

State and Independent Folklife Programs: % of Operating Budget							
<i>State Folklife Programs</i>				<i>Independent Programs</i>			
	Public (n = 41)	Private (n = 41)	Grant (n = 28)		Public (n = 12)	Private (n = 12)	Grant (n = 11)
10% or less	1	3	3	10% or less	0	0	2
20%	0	0	4	20%	2	0	2
30%	1	3	6	30%	0	1	0
40%	0	1	1	40%	0	2	0
50%	3	5	2	50%	2	2	1

60%	0	1	1	60%	2	0	0
70%	2	2	5	70%	1	0	1
80%	1	2	1	80%	0	2	1
90%	0	3	2	90%	0	0	0
100%	0	24	3	100%	5	0	1

3) Fundraising Efforts

As described earlier, the level of available funding, public support, and therefore amount of folklife activity greatly from state to state, often time period to time period, dependent on the current economic situation, political will, and in some cases, individual expertise available. Of the 47 state organizations that filled out this section, 42 stated they received federal funding and 40 claimed support from their state. In addition, 5 receive funds from their local municipalities, one from its county and another for an affiliated university. On the independent program side, 80% participating secured state funding, while only 50% received direct federal support.

Because of the fluctuating nature of this funding, many state programs and independent folklife organizations are dependent on numerous grants and direct solicitation for general operating support. The nation's folklife infrastructure is supported greatly by the NEA's Folk Arts Partnership Program. In addition to these opportunities, many programs write both public and private grants to sustain existing initiatives as well as create new opportunities for the general public, scholars, and cultural communities. Approximately 59% of state programs that answered this question, 24 out of 41, and 77%, 10 out of 13, of non-state affiliated organizations fundraise specifically for folklife activities, most through grant writing and/or direct solicitation. Other means of fundraising include special events, partnerships, earned income, and memberships.

State and Independent Folklife Programs – Fundraising Efforts							
<i>State Folklife Program (n = 41)</i>				<i>Independent Program (n = 13)</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	24	<i>No</i>	17	<i>Yes</i>	10	<i>No</i>	3
Grants			21	Grants			5
Direct Solicitation			13	Direct Solicitation			6
Partnerships			2	Partnerships			1
Earned Income			1	Earned Income			5
Memberships			2	Memberships			1
Special Events			1	Special Events			1

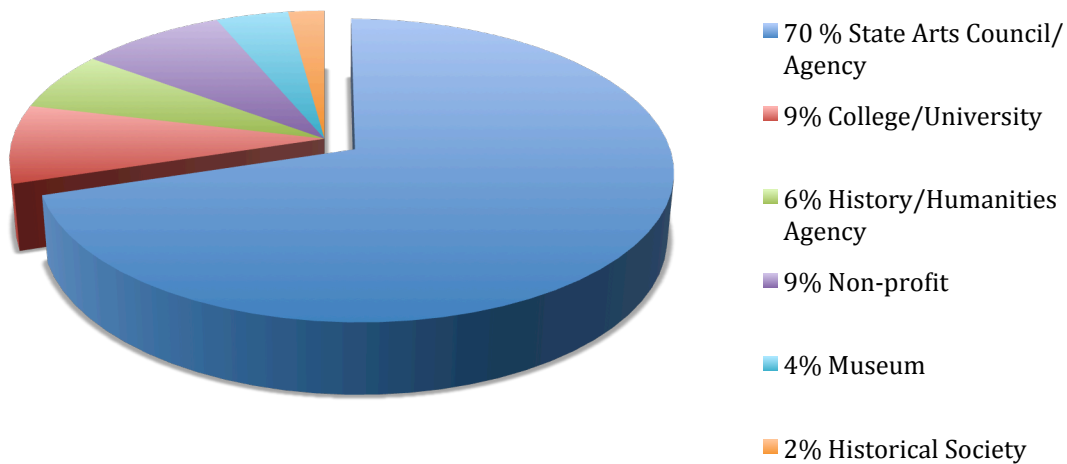
C. PHYSICAL AND OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

Almost every state in the nation has some sort of on-going folklife activity, even those without specifically dedicated state folklife programs, due to other non-profits, museums, colleges/universities, regional arts partners and/or individual scholars fulfilling some aspects of this role. There are a total of 47 state and jurisdiction folk arts programs of varying size and scope. However, if you compare the folklife field with other arts disciplines, it is apparent that, in general, folklife programs are far more meager at local, state, and regional levels.

Of the 47 state programs studied, the significant majority operate under a state organization- most often an arts council/agency (33), at times a history/humanities agency (3), but also including colleges/universities (4), museums (2), non-profits (4), an historical society, and a regional arts organization that is deeply involved with the state programs in its service area.

In addition to networking and at times formally partnering with local colleagues, the programs in all states work closely with national folklore programs, including the American Folklore Society, American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, NEA Folk & Traditional Arts Program, Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, and National Council for the Traditional Arts.

State Programs Operate Under:



State and Independent Folklife Programs – Operate Under

<i>State Folklife Program</i>		<i>Independent Program</i>	
State Arts Council/Agency	33	State Arts Council/Agency	2
College/University	4	College/University	4
History/Humanities Agency	3	History/Humanities Agency	1
Non-profit	4	Non-profit	6
Museum	2	Museum	1
Historical Society	1	Historical Society	0
Regional Arts Organization	0	Regional Arts Organization	1

As programs of both types are almost exclusively located in the agency or organization under which they operate, it would be redundant to provide a table or diagram illustrating this situation. There are, however, a number of circumstances such as South Carolina, Michigan, and Indiana,

where state affiliated programs are situated in museums. Such is also the case with an independent non-profit, the John C. Campbell Folk School Folklore Program, in North Carolina. South Arts – Folk & Traditional Arts Program is of note as it is the only existing Regional Arts Organization currently in operation. Located in Georgia, it serves a larger region, assisting scholars and implementing activities in multiple states and is not considered the official designated program of Georgia.

D. ACTIVITIES, OUTREACH, AND PROGRAMMING

State folklife programs, as well as non-affiliated organizations, strive to sustain cultural traditions within local communities while conducting significant new research, and then making it accessible to the general public through innovative programming. This work is reflected in a wide-range of forms across the nation – from developing festivals and convening workshops to hosting musical performances, collaborating with scholars, and utilizing new technologies. Public programming developed and implemented for diverse audiences includes exhibitions, musical performances, festivals, cultural workshops, media productions, apprenticeships, educational collaborations with schools, and public demonstrations, to name just a few. These programs may focus on the traditions of the state as a whole, cultures of a specific group, or particular themes like shipbuilding, traditional drumming, or textile traditions.

Promoting living cultures is clearly one of the most important objectives of every program throughout the nation. This activity was chosen almost unanimously as a core aim by each survey respondent. Folklorists use their skills/talents to enable local communities to present, document, and interpret their own traditions. It is clear from the contributed data that building respect and mutual understanding between and among local communities is a consistent goal.

Top Stakeholders

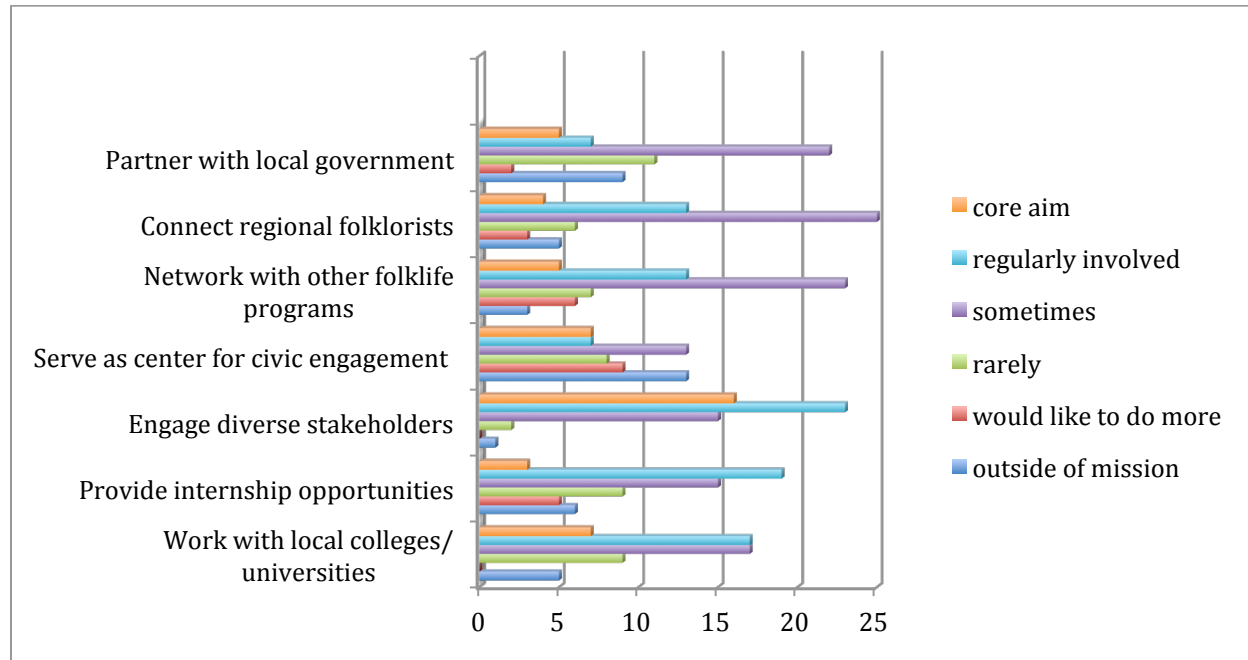
While a diverse group of stakeholders was identified during this project, it is clear that traditional artists and their communities, along with the general public, are the primary audience for programming, as well as those groups targeted for service. The vast majority of participants identified these two groups as key stakeholders they attempt to serve. Folklife programs strive to serve communities that often lie on the margins of society: immigrants, laborers, persons of color, speakers of English as a second language, the elderly, among others.

The different categories of related folklife activities were structured as follows:

- 1. Operational activities**
- 2. Fieldwork-related Activities**
- 3. Funding/Grants**
- 4. Community Outreach**
- 5. Public Programming**

***Note:** 47 state organizations filled out this section of the survey, but 3 did not “code” as to priorities, so the total aggregate data as explained/displayed below is for only 44 programs.*

Operational Activities: State and Independent Folklife Programs



OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Partner with local government

Engage diverse stakeholders

Connect regional folklorists

Provide internship opportunities

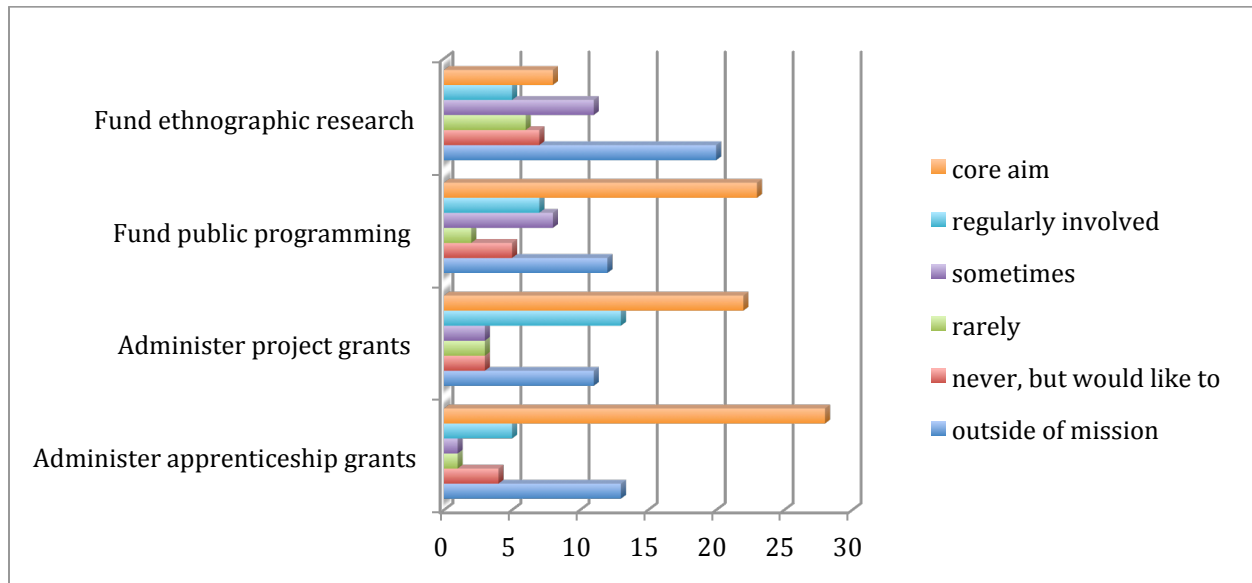
Network with other folklife programs

Work with local colleges/universities

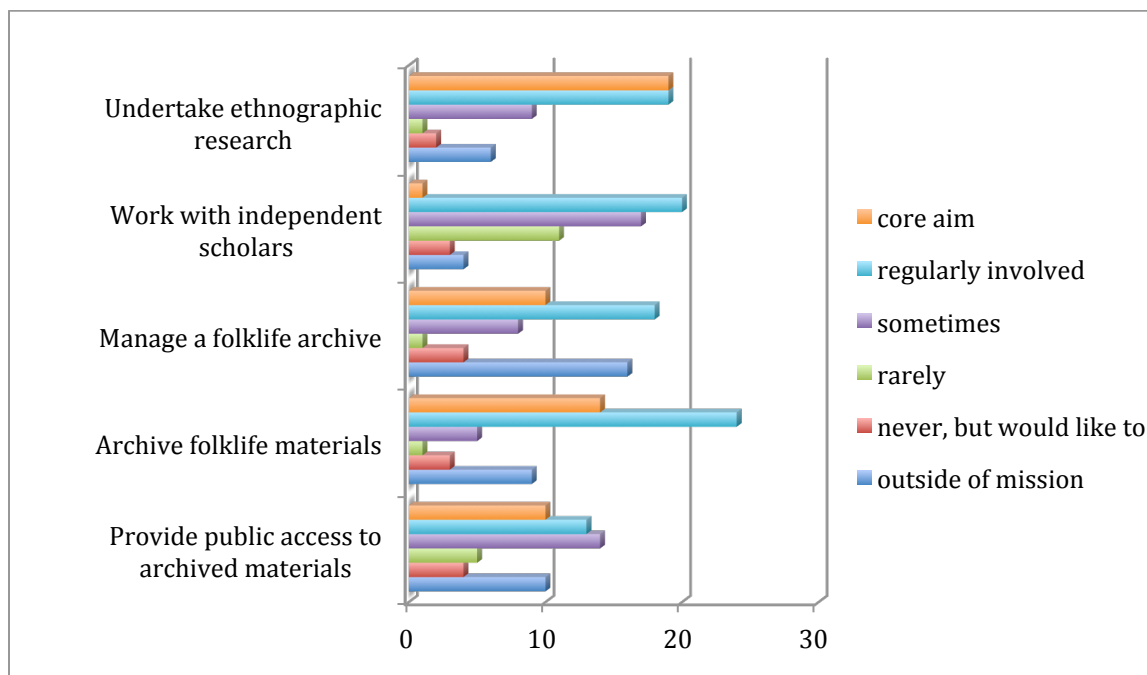
Serve as center for civic engagement

Traditional artists and their communities, as well as residents, are clearly identified as the main stakeholders for most state folklore programs as well as other organizations and centers. Experienced folklore staff, with the appropriate academic background and professional experience, allow for cultural sensitivity when working with traditional artists and their communities. This expertise is also necessary to ensure the proper documentation, stewardship, and engaging interpretation of traditions for diverse public audiences. Outreach is playing an increasingly significant role for folklore programs in the states. Many cultural communities have not been adequately served by past initiatives and efforts to rectify this situation are show in the interest in partnerships, civic engagement, and an emphasis on engaging diverse stakeholders.

Funding Provided By Program: State and Independent Folklife Programs



Fieldwork-related Activities: State and Independent Folklife Programs



Fieldwork-related Activities

Undertake ethnographic research

Archive folklife materials

Work with independent scholars

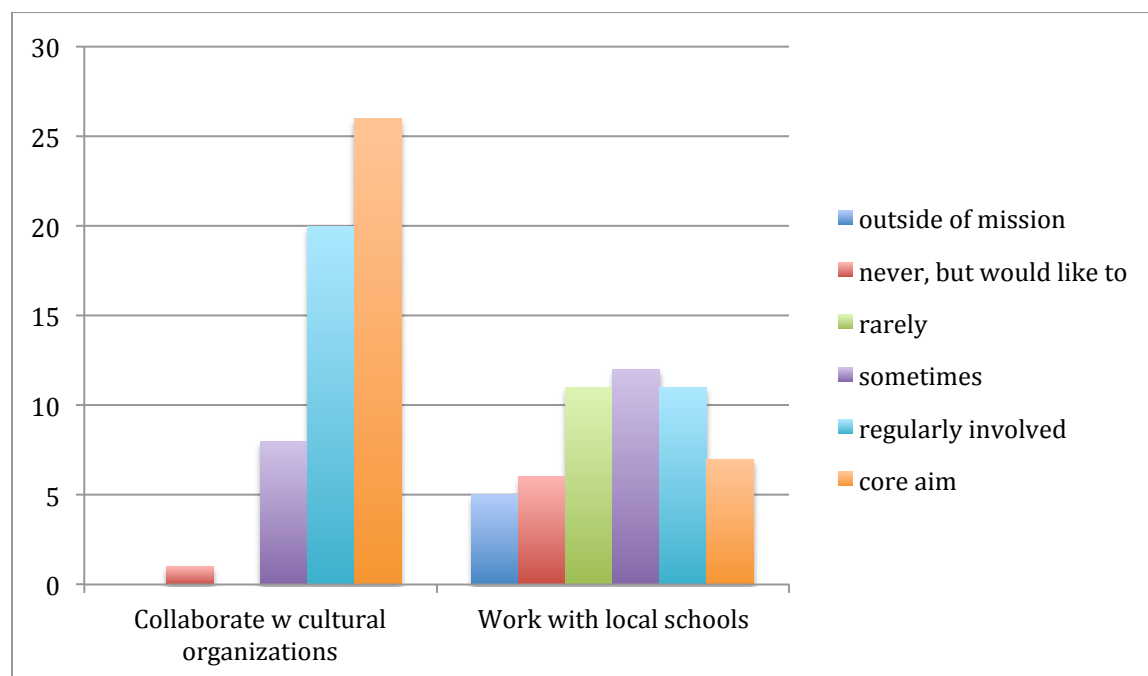
Provide public access to archived materials

Manage a folklife archive

As stated in the 2011 NASAA report: “Unless that outreach is extensive, deep and ongoing, a significant part of the country and of arts will not be represented nor included for a variety of reasons.” Ethnographic field research that serves identify new tradition bearers remains an important activity across all of the states. Documentation of this research continues to be an important responsibility, taking the form of both managing public archives as well as providing public access to these repositories for scholars, college students, and the general public. As noted earlier, the vast majority of state folklore programs are implemented by only 1 or 2 staff members who are, as likely as not, involved with coordinating multiple programs for their agency. Unfortunately, this at times leads to folklorists spending a significant amount of time on administrative duties as opposed to conducting fieldwork-related activities around the state.

It is commonly believed that ensuring that state programs include traditional artists and communities is key to bridging cultural differences and building understanding, respect, and civility in our nation. Education and interpretation are fundamental to the mission of folklore programs allowing individuals who would not otherwise interact with one another to engage in meaningful ways.

Community Outreach: State & Independent Folklife Programs

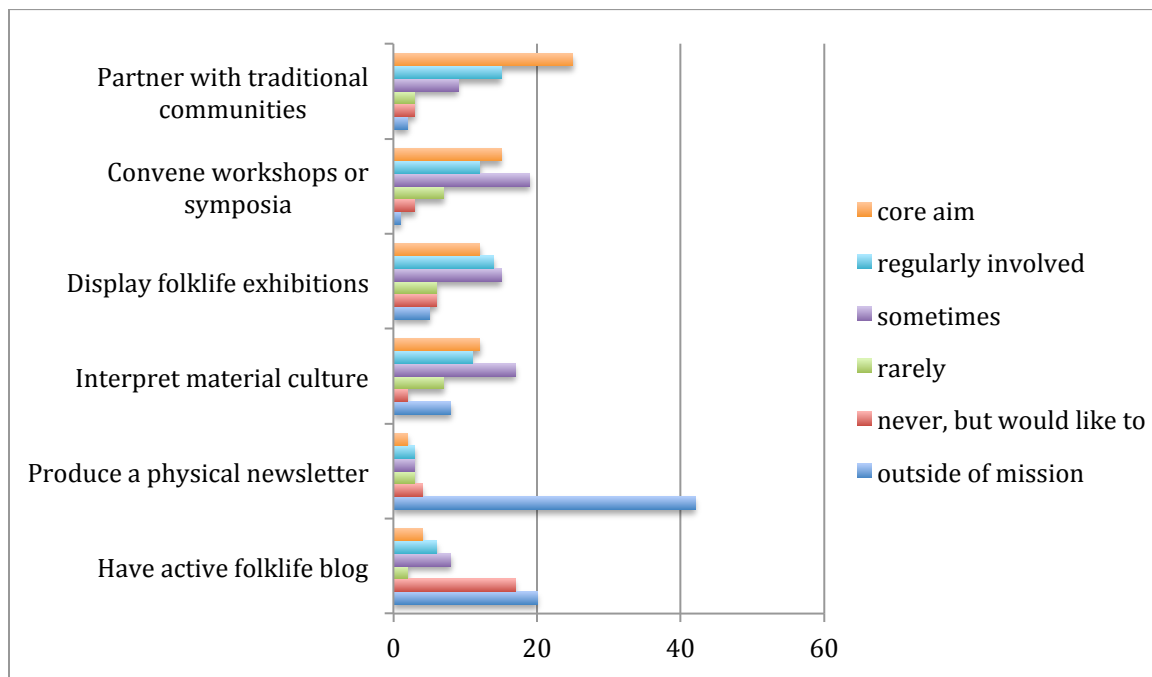
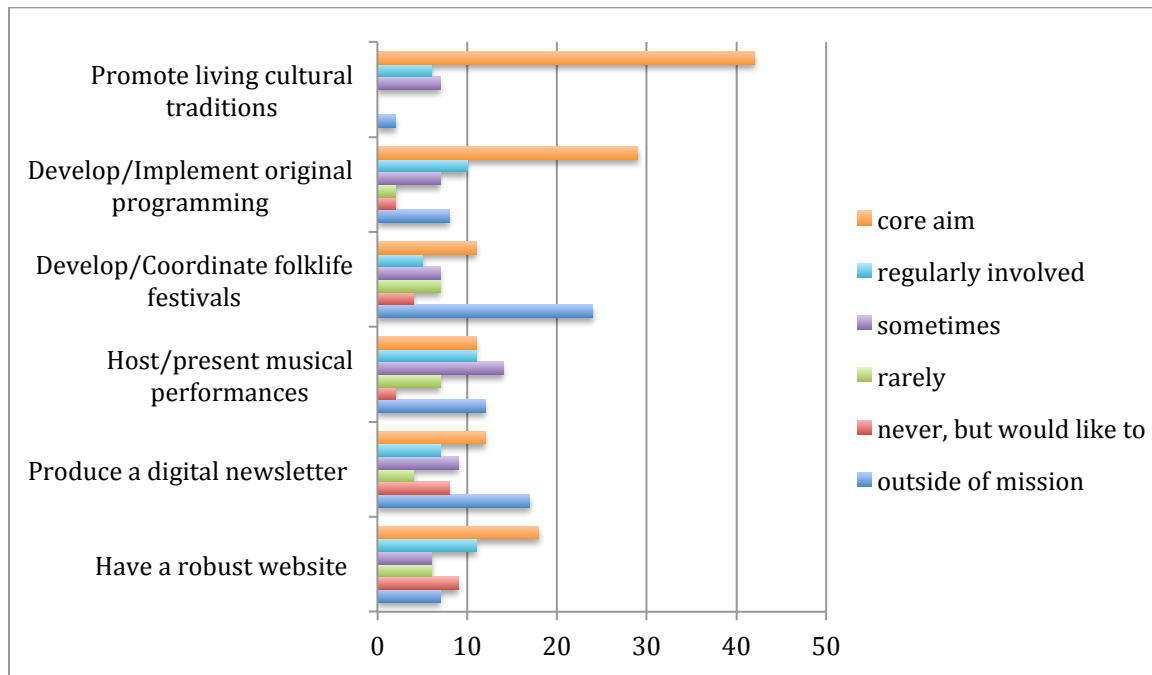


Community Outreach

Collaborate with other cultural organizations

Work with local schools

Public Programming: State & Independent Folklife Programs



Public Programming

Promote living cultural traditions	Partner with traditional communities
Develop/Coordinate folklife festivals	Convene workshops or symposia
Host/present musical performances	Display folklife exhibitions
Develop/Implement original programming	Interpret material culture
Produce a digital newsletter	Produce a physical newsletter
Have a robust website	Have active folklife blog

E. FOLKLIFE CENTERS

Most state folklife programs do not currently have, or self-identify with, designated folklife “centers,” described here as organizations with service-driven physical plants that can be visited by the public and that provide a variety of folklife activities for target audiences. And those are lucky enough to operate within these types of spaces may have different interpretations as to what this term actually means. One of the goals of this project was to ascertain whether a program is a *program*, or a *center*, in name as well as in action. Is it a destination for the public, such as a museum and/or archive, or is it based in an agency office, or other type of primarily private venue?

1) Folklife Centers in the States

Only 7 of the state folklife programs self-identified as overseeing a dedicated, folklife center: Arkansas, Michigan, New Jersey, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas, and Vermont.

Of note, a number of programs are closely affiliated and coordinate space with a formal museum: Indiana, Michigan, South Carolina, and Utah. As these museums have permanent, public physical plants that can be utilized by the program for exhibitions and other types of public programming, they too have taken on the manifestation of “centers” at times though not necessarily consistently. All of these programs have the advantage of being in a location that is designed to serve scholars, students, and the general public, with open hours, sometimes at night and on the weekends. In addition to the advantage of being hosted in a museum, Michigan’s archives are open 5 days a week by appointment, and they also coordinate a traveling exhibition service with a number of folklore-based displays. South Carolina has a strong partner in the McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina, coordinating research, social media, and potential performance/artist space on occasion.

Arkansas is affiliated with the State Parks Department and contains a facility that is open 6 -7 days per week, as well as a performance hall. New Jersey has a permanent center hosted at the state arts council open during office hours 5 days a week, but there is no performance or exhibition space for public programming. Demonstrations by artists and musicians are sometimes possible. Oregon Folklife Network has a similar situation, a 450 square-foot office

with public exhibit space accessible during the work day. Texas has a 1400 square-foot space accessible to scholars, students, and the general public with demonstration and dedicated exhibition areas. The Vermont Folklife Center most likely fits the general concept of what a formal “center” would look like, with a very large, 6000 square-foot permanent physical plant, open 7 hours a day, 6 days a week. They are open 2-4 evenings per month for special events, as well as every Saturday allowing families and working individuals to participate in activities. The galleries are used for intimate performances, with bigger events held off-site. Access for media producers and traditional artists were noted as additional target audiences.

2) “Not exactly...”

A number of other state programs have access to programming space but did not self-select as having a designated folklife center. Alabama utilizes the state arts council facilities for occasional exhibits and demonstrations. While open to scholars, students, and the public, hours are primarily determined by the availability of office staff. Though Indiana does not identify as having a center, it operates under a university museum umbrella; therefore, it has access to a very large physical location that is opened 6 days a week, including nights and weekends, with exhibit as well as performance and demonstrations spaces. Utah does not claim to operate as a center, but it is located, in part, at a historic house museum that is open 5 days a week, including nights and weekends. This includes an outdoor stage and dedicated exhibit space, as well as the possibility for musical performances. Again, the latter two do have a museum catering to educational programming and public access.

3) Other Programs and Non-State Affiliated Programs

There are a number of physical centers that exist in the states that are independent of any government agency. Similar to the state programs, these organizations focus on providing access to scholars, students, and the general public, as well as supporting traditional artists and developing a variety of public programming. The John C. Campbell Folk School Folklore Program emphasizes cultural transmission and teaching traditions and skills to the next generation. Open 7 days a week, 8 hrs a day, it provides dedicated exhibition space in 4000 square feet of space that includes an elevated stage, as well as demonstration areas. The Maine Folklife Center, the Kentucky Folklife Program, and the Center for Folklore Studies at The Ohio State University provide access to public during their office hours while working with student scholars. All of these centers operate within a university setting and, therefore, benefit from the physical plant and infrastructure offered by such a partnership. The Philadelphia Folklore Project has a similar access situation, working with traditional communities to convene workshops, host performances, and display exhibits while opening their doors by appointment to scholars during office hours. Their 1500 square-foot space is made available for artist/musician demonstrations, at times on nights and weekends.

Finally, the Western Folklife Center is an expansive organization with a relatively large staff and a significant amount of innovative programming targeted to multiple audiences with community outreach as a primary objective. Occupying a former hotel, the facilities allow for performances in a 300-seat theatre, as well as smaller artist/musician demonstrations. Regular access for the

general public, including students and scholars, is made available 6 days a week, including many nights and weekends. In addition, the size of the permanent plant allows for exhibitions on folklore topics.

Participating Folklore Programs:

24

This project attempted to collect data from every state, both in regards to designated state folklife programs, as well as from a number of other organizations that provide similar folklore-related activities and services. Those programs that filled in the identified survey are listed below. Thank you to every colleague who took the time to respond.

Alabama

Alabama Center for Traditional Culture

Alaska

Alaska State Council on the Arts Community and Native Arts Program

Arizona

Southwest Folklife Alliance

Arkansas

Arkansas Folk Art Program

Ozark Cultural Resource Center

California

Alliance for California Traditional Arts

Colorado

Native American Afterschool Arts Program/ Cultural Heritage Grant Program

Connecticut

Connecticut Cultural Heritage Arts Program

Florida

Florida Folklife Program

Georgia

South Arts - Folk & Traditional Arts Program

Hawaii

Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts / Folk & Traditional Arts Program

Idaho

Idaho Commission on the Arts

Illinois

Ethnic and Folk Arts Program and Master/Apprentice Program

Indiana

Traditional Arts Indiana

Iowa

Iowa Arts Council Folk & Traditional Arts Program

Kentucky

Kentucky Arts Council Folk and Traditional Arts

Kentucky Folklife Program

Louisiana

Louisiana Folklife Program

Maine

Maine Folklife Center

Maryland

Maryland Traditions, of the Maryland State Arts Council

Massachusetts

Folk Arts & Heritage

Michigan

Michigan Traditional Arts Program

Minnesota

Minnesota State Arts Board Folk and Traditional Program

Mississippi

Folk and Traditional Arts – Mississippi Arts Commission

Missouri

Missouri Folk Arts Program

Montana

Montana Folklife Program

Nebraska

Nebraska Folklife Network

Nevada

Nevada Arts Council Folklife Program

Western Folklife Center

New Hampshire

Heritage and Traditional Arts, New Hampshire State Council on the Arts

New Jersey

New Jersey State Council on the Arts Folk Arts Programs

New Mexico

New Mexico Arts – Folk Arts Program

New York

Folk Arts Program, New York State Council on the Arts

Brooklyn Arts Council: Folk Arts Program

Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education

New York Folklore Society

North Carolina

North Carolina Folklife Program

John C. Campbell Folk School Folklore Program

North Dakota

Folk and Traditional Arts Program

Ohio

Ohio Arts Council Folk and Traditional Arts Programs

Center for Folklore Studies – The Ohio State University

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Arts Council

Oregon

Oregon Folklife Network

Pennsylvania

Folk Art in PA

Rhode Island

Folk and Traditional Arts Program

South Carolina

Folklife & Traditional Arts Program, McKissick Museum, University of South Carolina/

South Carolina Arts Commission

South Dakota

South Dakota Arts Council Traditional Arts Program

Tennessee

Tennessee Arts Commission Folklife Program

Texas

Texas Folklife (Texas Folklife Resources)

Houston Arts Alliance Folklife + Traditional Arts

Utah

Folk Arts Program

Vermont

Vermont Folklife Center

Virginia

Virginia Folklife Program at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities

Washington

Center for Washington Cultural Traditions

West Virginia

West Virginia Folklife Program

Western Folklore Center**Wisconsin**

Wisconsin Arts Board – Folk Arts Program

Wyoming

Wyoming Arts Council

University of Wyoming American Studies Program